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XXXIX.—Horæ Zoologicæ

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Note.—Since the receipt of Mr. Arthur Strickland's communication, the second portion of a systematic arrangement and description of sharks by Drs. Müller and Henle, published at Berlin, has been received in this country, a reference to which appears to confirm the opinion given by our friend that the various published accounts of a spiny shark refer but to one species. The following are extracts from this valuable German work, p. 91 :—

Second Family. SCYMNI.

Second Genus. *Echinorhinus*, Blainv.—*Goniodus*, Agassiz.

Species 1. *Echinorhinus spinosus*, Bonap.

Le Bouclé, *Brouss.* p. 672. 21.

Sq. spinosus, *Linn. Gm.* 1500. 27.

Squale bouclé, *Lacep. i. p. 30. tab. 3. f. 2. Cop. Encyc.* p. 11. n. 22.

Sq. spinosus, *Bl. Schn.* 136.

Squale bouclé, *Risso. Ichth.* 42.

Scymnus spinosus, *Risso. Hist.* 136. *Cuv.* 393.

Leich bouclé, *Dict. des Sc. Nat.* pl. 28. f. 2.

Echinorhinus spinosus, Bonap. 13.

Sq. (*Echinorhinus*) spinosus, *Blainv. Faun. Franç.* p. 66.

Goniodus, *Agassiz*, vol. iii. tab. E. f. 13. (Teeth).

Hab. Mediterranean sea and the ocean.

Examples stated to have been seen by the authors of the work :—One in the Museum at Leyden ; one from the Cape by Dr. Smith.

The coloured figure of this shark sent us by Mr. Strickland, so closely resembles Dr. Smith's figure, as to make a second illustration unnecessary.—EDIT.

XXXIX.—*Horæ Zoologicæ.* By SIR W. JARDINE, Bart.

No. II. *The History and Habits of Crotophaga continued from page 171, by the Notes of Mr. Schomburgk on the Manners of the Birds in Guiana.*

IN a lately published number of the *Annals* we commenced a series of papers with the view of giving information as it occurred, and in the hope of calling attention and eliciting additional facts relative to the subjects which were treated of. It is highly satisfactory for us to think that our anticipations have

been so soon replied to. Mr. Schomburgk, in a recent visit, communicated many interesting traits in the manners of the birds of Guiana; and upon submitting to him the proof sheets of the preceding paper, p. 160, which had been just received, he kindly offered to write out for our "Horæ" the notes which he had collected upon the habits of the *Crotophagæ* in the different localities where he had met with them. These notes in general agree with those of our Tobago correspondent; and, in the breeding of the birds particularly, confirm what was stated regarding the incubation of *C. rugirostra*, identical with the smaller Guiana species. They leave however the curious question of some species at least (*C. major*) using a common nest in a manner undecided; though we must confess that information gathered in a proper way from natives has been generally found to be correct in its most important parts. The facts mentioned of their feeding, proved them as observed to be nearly omnivorous; but we still consider insects and fruits to be their principal food. We should also be prepared to find them occasionally eating carrion; but it may be a question worthy of notice whether the birds observed by Mr. Schomburgk on the dead sheep were employed in eating the flesh, or in collecting insects or larvæ which in a warm climate might be very soon attracted to, or engendered in animal matter*. Their resemblance in manners to the *Corvinæ* is also strikingly related; this may be one of analogy only, both the external form of the members and the internal structure appearing to lead to other groups; at the same time, as our facts accumulate, it may be found that the *Crotophagæ* may be more correctly placed among the "Rasorial Crows," the *Glau-copinæ* of Sw. exhibiting in the form of the foot the scansorial deviation.

"I have perused with great pleasure your notes on the History and Habits of *Crotophaga*; and as this genus, by the pe-

* Mr. Schomburgk informs us that "without further proofs to warrant a belief of their being carnivorous, he should rather think they were feeding on the larvæ. The distance was too great to determine whether they were tearing at the carrion or merely regaling themselves on the insects. In either case it would seem that they are not over nice in the selection of their food, and that the smell of putrefaction is not repulsive to them."—ED.

cular form of its beak, and its curious manners, is so well qualified to attract the attention of the most careless observer, it may be naturally supposed that it did not escape me.

“ You observe very justly, that at this time the specific distinctions of this genus are not well understood ; and that only with the possession of an extensive series from various localities, the value of these distinctions will be ascertained. The bird which you consider allied or identical with Mr. Swainson’s *C. rugirostra* appears to be the most common and the most widely distributed species. I have now a specimen before me which so accurately agrees with your description of that from Tobago, that there is not the slightest deviation in the dimensions or markings. My specimen was shot in the neighbourhood of Fort San Joaquim on Rio Branco, in lat. 3° 1’ N. The same species inhabits also the Virgin Islands, where they are known under the name of ‘ *Black Witches*.’

“ The account of your correspondent, Mr. Kirk, of their habits is graphic, and does not materially deviate from my own observations ; but he has forgotten to note that they prove very destructive to pigeon-peas (*Cytisus cajan*), and their sojourn in the negroes’ provision-field is by no means cherished by them. Mr. Kirk alludes to the circumstance of having found Guava seeds (*Psidium pyrifera*) in their stomach ; and I have to add, that they are partial to this fruit. I recollect that on riding one day from Cruxbay towards the eastern part of the island of St. John’s, I saw in the vicinity of the estate Biverhoutberg a flock of *Crotophagæ* on the carcase of a sheep, on which they were feeding. I was astonished at the circumstance, but not so my companion, who told me he had noted their carnivorous habits before. They resemble in that regard the *Corvidæ* ; indeed there are several points from which we might trace an affinity to that group. You have noted, p. 170, the resemblance of the tongue of the *Crotophaga* to that of the *Corvinæ*, and the intestinal canal which approaches to that of some of the *Fissirostres*. But there are other resemblances in their characters and habits which are perhaps more striking. They live in numerous bands, are omnivorous, build their nest in the manner of the *Corvidæ*, are clamorous, bold, advance on the ground by hopping, and like our raven and mag-

pie, have at all times been objects of superstition to the common people.

“Setting aside the peculiar shape of its beak, the *Crotophaga* resembles the *Corvidæ* further in some points of its outer appearance. Its form and graceful motions when gliding through between the branches of the trees and shrubs or when on the wing remind us of the genera *Pica* and *Garrulus*; at the base of the bill we observe setaceous feathers, a character of the *Corvinæ*; the fourth quill is the longest, colour entirely black, glossed with violet reflexions like the genus *Corvus*. The flesh has a disagreeable odour; nevertheless I have been informed that this does not deter some of the negroes from eating them; and I have been more than once told, that they are used as substitutes for pigeons or rooks in pies.

“I agree perfectly with Mr. Kirk that they do not build their nest on the ground; it is generally built in the fork of trees: but although the construction of the nest resembles that of the *Corvidæ*, it is built at a less height from the ground. I cannot substantiate by ocular evidence that they breed in community, but I have heard it always asserted of the larger species (*C. major*). The Indians have told me on inquiry, that in the nest of the smaller species, which you call *C. rugirostra*, they find only from five to seven eggs; but in those of the larger they are so numerous that they fill a whole calabash. The Indians, at least the Warraus and Arawaks, eat these eggs; and their evidence that they take such a large number of eggs from the nests of *C. major*, confirms the belief that they use a common nest. Sororeng, one of the Indians who has accompanied me to London, and who served me as interpreter during the last expedition, assures me that he has seen three birds of the larger species (*C. major*) which they call *Woworima*, sitting in one nest; and on asking him how many eggs he saw in the nest, he designated the number by pointing to the number of his fingers and his toes.

“I have noted both species (*C. major* and *Ani rugirostra*?) along the rivers of Guiana; they are therefore not peculiar to savannahs. When ascending the rivers Essequibo, Parima, Rio Branco, Orinoco, &c. we observed them frequently along the woody banks of these rivers: disturbed by the noise of our

canoes, they sounded their shrill notes, and followed in short flights from shrub to shrub. The Indian is no friend to the *Crotophaga*; he has an idea that this bird cannot bear the human whistle, and flies as soon as it is sounded. Our Indian guides amused themselves therefore frequently in breaking out on a sudden in a shrill whistle; and were highly delighted when the startled birds took to their wings. I subjoin the Indian names for the lesser *Crotophaga* (*C. rugirostra*). It is called in the *Lingua Geral* which is spoken in the province *Para Ano Curauca*, in the *Arawak Cunuba*, in the *Macusi Owowi*, in the *Wapeshana Houwi*. *C. major* is called *Wowo-rima* by the *Macasis*, and *Cosac* by the *Warraus*."

[To be continued.]

XL.—Information respecting Botanical Travellers.

Mr. Schomburgk's recent Expedition in Guiana.

[Continued from p. 266.]

THERE are contradictory accounts among the Indians of a species of a cat, which in size and spotting resembles the Cheta (*Felis jubata*). Its ground colour is yellowish-fawn, and the spots are of a uniform colour and full and complete. Such appeared the cat to me which I saw watching me as related above*; and although I have doubted the evidence of my eyes, the existence of such a species has gained additional strength by the circumstance, that, on visiting the British Museum with the three Indians who accompanied me from Guiana to England, they took the Cheta to be a specimen of that species which is indigenous to Guiana, and identical with the one which annoyed us so much.

In the Supplement to Buffon's 'Histoire Naturelle,' tome iii. planche 38†, the figure of a cat is given which agrees with the one which I saw at Curassawaka, and it would be remarkable if, after all

* See p. 265.

† Nous donnons ici la figure d'un animal de l'espèce des léopards ou des jaguars. Le dessin nous en a été envoyé par feu M. Colinson, mais sans nom, et sans aucune autre notice. Et comme nous ignorons, s'il appartient à l'ancien ou au nouveau continent, et qu'en même temps, il diffère de l'once et du leopard, par la forme des taches et plus encore du jaguar et de l'ocelot, nous ne pouvons décider auquel de ces animaux on doit le rapporter; seulement il nous paroît qu'il a un peu plus de rapport avec le jaguar, qu'avec le léopard.—*Ibid.* p. 218.